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ABRAHAM LINCOLN

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the human race of magnificent leadership
and patriotism than that of Abraham
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SPEECH OF HON. JOSEPH G. CANNON OF ILLINOIS

BEFORE THE

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
PITTSBURG, PA.

FEBRUARY 12, 1910



WASHINGTON

1910

SPEECH

OF

HON. JOSEPH G. CANNON.

[The following speech, delivered by Hon. JOSEPH G. CANNON, of Illinois, before the Chamber of Commerce of Pittsburg, Pa., on Lincoln's Birthday, February 12, 1910, is printed pursuant to unanimous consent.]

Speaker CANNON said:

Mr. TOASTMASTER, Mr. PRESIDENT: It is now 20 minutes of 11 o'clock. I am not going to apologize to this virile audience, young men all; and if there are any who have had their threescore and ten years I can not sit them out. So, if I talk thirty minutes, and talk too long, signify it. [Laughter.]

It has been said that I had the honor of a personal acquaintance with Lincoln. Yes; and yet I can tell you but little that is new touching Abraham Lincoln. The survivors of the twenty-two hundred thousand men who in the hell of the four years' great contest followed him through evil and through good report know of his magnificent leadership. It is not necessary that I should say anything to them about Lincoln personally.

"Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" was the question asked almost two thousand years ago; and they said, "Come and see." The Master came out of Nazareth. The world received Him; the world crucified Him upon the cruel cross. He had His followers. That great character, with His philosophy and His great, kind, human, and divine heart, felt that He could afford to wait, and yet how He would have gotten along without St. Paul, I do not know, nor can any man tell.

St. Paul broke away from the Jews, broke away from their prejudices. His love for his Master made him carry the teachings of the Master not only to Jews, but to Gentiles, and in the most prosperous portions of the earth we have the theology, the philosophy, the teachings of the Master represented in our Christian civilization. He was of humble origin. Matthew traced back his ancestry to Abraham, but he was of humble origin, born in a manger.

Abraham Lincoln, human, of humble but honorable parentage, born of forbears humble but honorable, who in Massachusetts, in New Jersey, in Pennsylvania, in Virginia, across the mountains to the "dark and bloody ground," contributed their mite amongst the other pioneers to the founding and the preservation of Commonwealths. In the humble cabin in which he was born no man could have prophesied without derision as to how he should lead the American people. His father was not a slaveholder, and the great contest that was then ahead was a contest between servile and free labor—servile labor down south of Mason and Dixon's line—and while Lincoln's father, Thomas, may not have fully realized why he crossed the Ohio

and sojourned in Indiana and took the family, Abraham amongst them, to Illinois; while he may not have reasoned it out, he acted in common with the forbears of many of us south of Mason and Dixon's line. Quakers, Moravians, English, Scotch, Irish, German, the nonslaveholders, moved out under that same impulse that actuated Thomas Lincoln to cross Mason and Dixon's line—that their children and their children's children might be in that part of our common heritage where labor was honorable and free from degradation by coming in competition with servile labor.

LIFE ON THE FRONTIER.

It was fortunate for all of us that Lincoln had this early training and humble beginning.

The college and the university did not exist in the great Middle West. There was no institution of learning there at that time that was as good as a common high school now, of which multiplied thousands abound throughout the length and breadth of the Republic. He grew and became a clerk in a little country store, and sold all kinds of things, amongst others, with the civilization as they had it then, whisky. Douglas taunted him with it, and Lincoln said:

Yes, I did; but it takes two to make a bargain. I was inside the counter and Douglas was outside.

[Laughter.]

Then he was a surveyor. He was patriotic. In the fierce contest that the pioneers had with the aborigines, he made haste as a volunteer in the Black Hawk war.

Back again in Illinois, he had few text-books, but under very discouraging circumstances he acquired something of the knowledge of his chosen profession—that of the law.

Lincoln was always a politician, always a partisan. There were no Carnegie libraries. Books were scarce. A copy of the Bible, Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, Josephus, Rollins's Ancient History, and perhaps one copy of Shakespeare to a township were the books he had access to. In the law office which loaned him books there was a copy of The Federalist. He early became a follower of Alexander Hamilton. Ambitious to take part in politics, he became a candidate for the legislature in 1832 in the county of Sangamon. His opponent was Peter Cartwright, that virile, devoted Methodist minister, who at a conference in Nashville happened to meet Andrew Jackson; and as I heard him tell it—and it is recorded in his biography—all that country of the great Middle West, reaching out as far as the white man had trod, the ministers, in their hunting shirts made of homespun, gathered at Nashville. Cartwright did not like Bascom.

Bascom afterwards became a bishop in the Methodist Church. Cartwright, in referring to him, said he was a dandy. They met, and being in charge of the church at Nashville, Cartwright was not asked to preach; and as he told the story the brethren rebelled, and he said:

Bascom felt like he had to call on me, and he said: "Peter Cartwright will preach at this house to-morrow morning at 6 o'clock."

Said he:

I sprang to my feet and I said: "Brethren, get up, come before breakfast, and we will have services in this house, and by the grace of God, aided by your presence, we will have such an outpouring of the spirit of God as this conference has not witnessed."

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He told the story further that as the congregation gathered—

The tail of my hunting shirt was jerked, and Bascom said to me: "Be keerful, General Jackson is coming down the aisle;" and I turned on him, and I said: "Who is General Jackson? If he doesn't repent and receive forgiveness, God Almighty would damn his soul as quick as he would that of a Guinea nigger."

[Laughter.]

And Bascom said: "Jackson will cut off your ears."

But as the congregation disbursed Jackson made his way down the aisle and he took from his pocket a coin that was equal in value to a \$5 gold piece, and he said:

I want to contribute this to the Lord's work. You are my kind of a man.

[Laughter.]

Of course, Peter Cartwright in those early days remained a Democrat up to the time of his death, except when the great struggle came between servile labor and free labor, for the first time he became a follower of the man whom he had defeated in 1832.

LINCOLN IN POLITICS.

Somebody has said: "Beware of the man who has but one book." That is a very good saying, because the man who reads but one book criticises it, thinks about it, gets outside of it, makes it his own, and is more competent than the man who reads a thousand books with a hop, skip, and a jump, so that what he reads feeds in and feeds out, without leaving anything in him. So Lincoln, from his early law reading, knew something of Hamilton, and I have here his first platform, on which he ran for the legislature in 1834 and was elected.

I am for a national bank; I am for a high protective tariff and the system of internal improvements.

These are my sentiments and political principles.

[Applause.]

Democracy was triumphant, and yet Lincoln was elected. He had many terms in the legislature. In 1843, speaking for his Whig brethren in the legislature and getting ready for the great contest of 1844, he proposed this resolution, which was adopted:

Resolved, That a tariff of duties on imported goods producing sufficient revenue for the payment of the necessary expenses of the National Government and so adjusted as to protect American industry is indispensably necessary to the prosperity of the American people.

[Applause.]

His advocacy of a "protective tariff" was not limited by time or conditions. He demanded protection to American industry, not in the infant stage or any other stage, but as a permanent policy of advantage, if not of necessity, for the development and advancement of the United States among the nations of the earth. He proclaimed his belief in the doctrine of Alexander Hamilton at a time when it seemed that the popularity of Jackson had given the Democratic party a perpetual lease on the will of the majority.

There was another resolution in which he voiced his opposition and that of those who followed him at that time to the extension of servile labor into any Territory of the United States.

He practiced law on a country circuit. He was easily the leader of the bar on that circuit—the old ninth circuit. David Davis, the *nisi prius* judge, was afterwards nominated by Lincoln for justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. He was a great friend of Lincoln. Both of them were Whigs. I say he was easily the leader of the bar, but all the time he was talking politics. Even after I went to Illinois the only amusement they had was when twice a year they held the circuit court, which was the *nisi prius* court of common-law jurisdiction, law, and equity. Twice a year the lawyers would come riding in on horses. A little later on some of the county towns were reached by railroad, and, of course, they were utilized, and the jurors and the witnesses would come to the county seat. There were no theaters and few circuses. Van Amberg did run a great moral menagerie once in a while [Laughter.] I was 20 years old before I ever saw any other amusement. They came together to visit. They filled up the houses in the little county town. Some of them camped out in tents, some slept in their wagons while they were in attendance upon the court. They knew the merits and the power of the lawyers as they addressed the court and wrestled for verdicts. But at least one time in the day, sometimes at the hour of adjournment at noon and sometimes in the evening, the lawyers in attendance would address the people from the political standpoint. Lincoln was always ready under those conditions.

I am not going to weary you by reminiscing. I am tolerably careful about that. It is the weakness of men past three score and ten to reminisce. Sometimes we begin and we say, "Well, now, it was the year of the big snow." [Laughter.] "It was the year of the shooting stars. I guess that was 1832, or maybe it was 1382." [Laughter.] And so it runs. Therefore I rarely indulge in reminiscences. I am doing more of it to-night than I ever expect to do again in my life. We are living in the present. It is well to refer to the past just enough to profit by its experiences, so that we plant our footsteps in wisdom now, and prophesy for the future. When the Master was bidding for recruits and one said to Him, "Lord, suffer me first to go out and bury my father." He turned and said to him, "Let the dead bury their dead." And as the life of a generation is less than forty years, that was very good advice. Therefore tell me if you grow weary of my reminiscences. [Laughter and applause and cries of "Go on."]

THE MISSOURI COMPROMISE.

Away back in 1820 Missouri was admitted, the southern boundary, 36° 30' north latitude. It was a sad day for people who were devoted to free labor. It was a great contest, and that compromise was made, and it was therein written that in the future, at least in spirit if not in letter, that in the States formed from the territory north of 36° 30' there should be free labor, that they should come in free; substantially the same stipulation that was made in the ordinance of 1787 as to the great Northwest Territory.

The conflict was thickening and growing, slave labor upon one side and free labor upon the other, and the compromise was made that Missouri might come in, stretching away up to the

southern boundary of what is now Iowa, but that never thereafter should it happen again, and that as to territory south of that line, it should be left to the people. I should weary you if I should tell you about the repeal of that compromise in 1854. I should weary you if I told you that following that repeal the Supreme Court of the United States, by a majority vote, by an obiter—the question not being involved in the decision of the case—decided that, under the Constitution, slaves were property, and decided expressly that they might go into all the Territories and be protected under the Constitution, and decided, in principle, that they might go anywhere in the United States. The country was aflame. You, BISHOP SMITH, sitting here by me, were old enough to recollect it. Not only were the Whigs aflame, but the free-soil Democrats also. To describe it by the single expression that we sometimes use farther West, “there was blood on the face of the political moon.” A great contest in Illinois resulted in the election of Trumbull for Senator. Lincoln was the idol of the Whigs. They had lacked 5 votes of enough to elect Lincoln. There were 5 free-soil Democrats who would not vote for him and, under the advice of Lincoln, they elected Trumbull. Lincoln cared but little for political preferment. He saw the great contest coming. Two years later the great canvass was made between Lincoln and Douglas in Illinois, of which canvass the whole country took note. Lincoln was nominated by a popular convention, and he announced his platform upon which to make that contest with Senator Douglas. I have it here. It is brief. Listen :

A house divided against itself can not stand. I believe this Government can not endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved. I do not expect the house to fall, but I expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction, or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new, North as well as South.

In 1858 I went to Illinois from Indiana. It was not a long journey. About 60 miles. I settled in the new county of Douglas. The prairie stretched away. In the little county town there were not over a dozen houses, and beyond on the prairie, as far as the eye could reach, there was but a single house. The Illinois Central Railroad had just been constructed.

I heard two of those debates, one at Sullivan, Ill., and one at Charleston, Ill. I think I should have journeyed over the State to hear the others if the walking had not been poor. [Laughter.] It was a wonderful contest—between giants. Douglas, born in Vermont, a great politician, of national and world-wide reputation, was remarkably strong and resourceful. In point of fact his heart beat true to human freedom, but as he was a member of that great party that was dominated by servile labor his ambition created the desire to be President. The contest was fought out. Lincoln failed to reach the Senate, but the whole country was aflame, and at the end of those great debates he had a national if not a world-wide reputation.

NOMINATED FOR PRESIDENT.

Then came the Cooper Union speech. Then came the campaign in Ohio in 1859, and, when 1860 came, Illinois concluded to present him as her candidate for the nomination for the

Presidency. In the northern part of the State, especially in Chicago, there was much of settlement from New York; something from New England. They were greatly attached to Seward, who was a great man, a man of culture. We met in Decatur, Ill. I was a delegate in that convention; drove there in a farm wagon 60 miles across the prairie.

The convention was held in a structure erected between two brick buildings, with posts cut from the forest, stringers cut from the forest, and covered with boughs cut from the forest, and the ends open. The multiplied thousands gathered—earnest, determined men. Just about the time the convention was organized, a voice came, "Make way for Dick Oglesby and John Hanks." After much of effort a narrow passage was made, and they passed through it, bearing two old walnut rails. They were set up, and there was a legend on a strip of cotton, "These two rails were made by John Hanks and Abraham Lincoln in 1830." There was great enthusiasm. Lincoln was a great lawyer; had won his spurs in the famous debate which attracted the attention of the whole country; but the American people, always reaching out for something that will touch the popular heart, found it there. The crowd closed up, and the cry came for Lincoln. He could not get through; and great, tall, gaunt man as he was, they literally picked him up and passed him over their heads. He did not talk much. Somebody asked him, an hour before, if it was proper for him to be there, as he was a candidate for the Presidency; and a queer expression came over his face, and he said, "The truth is, Arch."—it was Mr. Archibald Van Deeren to whom he was talking—"I am most too much of a candidate to be here, but hardly enough to stay away." [Laughter.]

The audience were wild with enthusiasm. He talked a little, not to exceed five minutes. Somebody sang out, "Abe, did you make those rails?" his reply came "John Hanks says we made those rails. I do not know whether we did or not, but I have made many better ones than those." [Laughter.]

The Seward people in that convention were swept off their feet, and a delegation unanimously chosen by that convention, consisting of the personal and political friends of Abraham Lincoln, went to the convention held in the wigwam a week or two later at Chicago. You all know the result.

Then came the campaign. Lincoln behaved very well. He did not make speeches. He did not make a campaign. He answered a few letters. If you want to know what was the platform adopted at Chicago, read the last Republican platform; and you have everything in that platform that was in the platform adopted in 1860, touching economic questions, and which platform the pen of Abraham Lincoln drew. [Applause.]

The campaign that followed was a fierce one. "Black Republican." "Do you want your daughter to marry a nigger?" "Abolitionist." All that kind of thing.

Lincoln was not an abolitionist, he was a lawyer. Up to that time and after he became President he was not a follower of Garrison. They would have swept slavery with a strong hand, by revolution or otherwise. Some of them would have been willing to see two governments, in order that we might be rid of slavery. Lincoln voiced his platform and his true feelings

when he said that he would not, as man, citizen, or lawyer, interfere with slavery where it then existed; but that if it was confined to its then limits, in the fullness of time it would disappear. You may say that was the politician's view. It was good politics for votes, and as the world was not made in a day, and as in a government of the people you can not make progress except as you keep the majority of the people with you, it was good all around.

Elected President, the threat of secession came. He remained at Springfield, and after the campaign I saw him once, when he was on his way, in a day coach, without a companion, to go to Charleston, Ill., to meet, for the last time in his life, the old step-mother, who called him "my boy Abe" up to the time of his death, and she lived longer than Lincoln lived. She was an illiterate, plain, homespun woman, but good stuff. She had been kind to Lincoln, and gloried in his success. She died calling him "my boy Abe."

LINCOLN'S FIRST INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

The contest came. You recollect his first message, the inaugural. Let me read a little. If I am talking too long, stop me. [Cries of "Go on!"] In his first inaugural address, he said:

Plainly the central idea of secession is the essence of anarchy. A majority held in restraint by constitutional checks and limitations—

He spoke of constitutional checks and limitations. There was nowhere in that inaugural, or in any state paper, or in any statement, or in the mind of Lincoln, that the Chief Executive could do anything except that which was authorized in a government of the people by law [applause]; and it remains for wild-eyed sons of destiny of a later day to say that the Executive can do anything that is not expressly prohibited by the letter of the law. But I will read the rest of it:

A majority held in restraint by constitutional checks and limitations, and all this changing easily with deliberate changes of public opinion and sentiments, is the only true sovereign of a free people. Whoever rejects it does of necessity fly to anarchy or to despotism. Unanimity is impossible. The rule of a minority as a permanent arrangement is wholly inadmissible; so that, rejecting the majority principle, anarchy or despotism in some form is all that is left.

The South seceded. We went to the limit to prevent secession. Just before Lincoln was inaugurated a constitutional amendment, called the "thirteenth amendment" to the Constitution, was passed in the House, which was Republican, and in the Senate, which was also Republican, because many of the Senators and Representatives from the Southland had already journeyed out of Congress. They submitted that thirteenth amendment, which provided that in the future the Constitution should never be amended so as to interfere with slavery where it then existed. Lincoln, after his inauguration, sent that amendment to the States. Referring to it in his inaugural message, he said in substance that as the express terms of the amendment were, in his judgment, implied in the Constitution as it was, he did not see any objection to making the express amendment. He went to the limit. He was urged by the radicals in the far North, away from the border land, to make all the concessions possible to prevent secession, and he did. He said

to Greeley, in that famous letter of his, "I will preserve the Union; with slavery as it exists now if I must; without slavery if I can, but I will preserve the Union." [Applause.]

LINCOLN THE LEADER OF THE PEOPLE.

Men in this world must be practical. Civilizations must be practical. Majorities must be practical. Lincoln knew that the radical element in the Northland was away from Mason and Dixon's line. He knew that the radical element in the Southland was in the Gulf States. The theater of that great contest was to be in the border land and of the border land. Born in Kentucky, living in Illinois, the southern and central parts of Illinois and Indiana having been principally settled from Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia, whose people had gone there to get away from slavery, the hearthstone was back in the old home, the kin were there, and they had something of the prejudices against servile labor that necessarily would linger with them.

They were willing to follow Lincoln in his contest for freedom in the Territories; but when the cry of "Abolitionist" was raised many of them wavered. I do not know, I do not affirm or dispute, that God raised up Abraham Lincoln to lead the people of this country to the preservation of the Union. Sometimes I think under the first law that He imposed upon the race after the fall we have been operating without special Providences since. I do not affirm or deny it, but I do know that Abraham Lincoln was a leader in that great contest, and knew how far he could go and how fast he could go and keep in supporting distance of the people who lived in Kentucky, and Missouri, and Virginia, and the southern parts of the States of Indiana, and Illinois, and Ohio, and Pennsylvania, and Maryland, upon the border land. All he had to do was to place his hand upon his pulse and count his heart beats, and when he got the answer he knew that he had the answer of a majority of that people whom he was leading upon the theater of that great contest. [Applause.]

"On to Richmond!" was the cry. You older people recollect it. Greeley in his Tribune, and the metropolitan press generally, took command of the army. "On to Richmond! We will bring this great contest at once to a close." The battle of Bull Run came, and with it came defeat, and, lo, how the tune changed.

I have great respect for the press. It reaches the people once or twice daily. I have great respect for the periodicals called "magazines." They reach the people weekly or semi-monthly or monthly; but as I recollect the past, I may be pardoned when they cry, "Do this or that or the other," if I inquire first, at least in my own mind, whether my judgment and your judgment is content to follow the orders that are given. [Applause.] Because no sooner had Bull Run come than Horace Greeley, whose pen I used to think was touched with inspiration—I read Greeley's Tribune out on the Wabash once a week from boyhood up to that time—wrote his letter to Lincoln and said, "Make peace upon the best terms you can get." And then the New York Times proposed that the President should be superseded, and the Chicago Times, and quite generally the metropolitan press, proposed to throw up the sponge.

We think now that the sensational press is pretty bad, but I think you wicked people will understand when I say to you, from my recollections of the press then, that the press of that day could give cards and spades to the sensational press of to-day and beat them at the game. [Applause and laughter.] So the war waged on. Cartoons! Oh, we have vicious cartoons. [Laughter.] That great cartoonist, Davenport, covered Mark Hanna with dollar marks for the gold that was paid him by Hearst. I never quarreled with Davenport. He must live. He repented in sackcloth and ashes; and now that Mark Hanna has crossed over, there is no man of any party throughout the Republic who would accuse him of a dishonorable act in private or public life. [Applause.] If you will go back and look at the cartoons of Lincoln's day you will wonder whether art is not brutalizing instead of ennobling.

MORTON AND YATES.

Then came the contest of 1862. No two men ever worshipped the same god, or ever will. Our idea of Deity does not change Deity. He is to each individual according to the conception of the individual. There was conflict amongst our brethren. The church South prayed for slavery and sustained secession. The church North in part sustained Lincoln, in part criticised him and denounced him. I am not speaking disrespectfully of the church. The Christian church is a great power for the up-building of civilization. It does not make any difference whether you or I have faith or not, the average man is a religious animal, and he will have some kind of religion; and there is no religion that ever existed in the tide of time that equals the Christian religion. [Applause.] People who believe in it, however they may disbelieve in minor matters, come near enough to believing so that they cooperate; but the churches grew quite uneasy about Lincoln. They sent delegations down to Washington. There were some of them who went from Chicago, and with great concern instructed him, "Thus saith the Lord." You recollect Lincoln's answer. He said:

There is no human being living who is more anxious to know what the Lord would have me do than I am. I am clothed with responsibility, and it seems to me if He is willing to accord His command to anyone, that He would give it to me.

That was a few days before the notice of the emancipation proclamation, which was given in September, 1862. That proclamation had been written for three months, and Lincoln, with his great desire to save the Republic, with his great knowledge, with his great courage, was waiting, waiting, waiting, until the boys in blue might gain a victory or two; waiting until their letters should come from the southland, where they were fighting the battles of the Republic, to their brothers and parents and friends, that they might also make converts; waiting for the people to rise up and sing against the opposition of the sensational press and the cowardly would-be leaders; waiting for them to sing, "We're coming, Father Abraham, three hundred thousand more." [Applause.]

Within a week after the Chicago ministers returned to Chicago Lincoln issued that proclamation, and gave notice that if the forces in rebellion did not lay down their arms by the 1st of January, under the war power of the Government, under the

maxim that in time of war all laws are silent, he would proclaim freedom to the slaves. Then there were hard times in Illinois and Indiana. Those two States had great, stalwart, patriotic governors. Measuring my words, if there had not been a Lincoln, I believe Oliver P. Morton would have been more nearly like Lincoln than any other man who lived at that time. The Indiana elections came. Copperhead legislatures were chosen in both States, and by legislation and refusal to legislate they did all they could to weaken the federal arms. They withheld appropriations in Indiana; and from that time until another legislature was elected in 1864, Oliver P. Morton could only carry on the state government in Indiana, could only enlist and clothe and forward to the front the patriotic sons of that great State by pledging his personal credit with that of Newman and others, through Winslow, Lanier & Co., of New York, to obtain the money necessary to carry on the state government.

In the constitution of Illinois there is power, when the senate and house disagree about the day for adjournment, that the governor may prorogue the legislature. I do not know whether there was such a disagreement as the constitution of the State of Illinois contemplated or not, but here was a legislature doing all it could by its counsel to promote desertions and, by refusing necessary legislation, to embarrass the cause of the Union. The house passed a resolution fixing a day for adjournment. The senate disagreed and sent it back to the house. Governor Yates said that that authorized him to prorogue the legislature, and he did it on the double-quick. [Laughter.] The governor set sentinels at the doors of the statehouse, and the legislature met in a church. Camp Yates was 3 miles away, and he sent an orderly with a message to that rump legislature, as he called it, that if they did not disperse he would disperse them at the point of the bayonet, and they got! [Laughter.]

And all the while, with all the abuse, with the quarrels in the Cabinet, with the premier suggesting that the conduct of the war had better be left to him; with the failures of generals; with the universal criticism of generals, of colonels, and even of captains; with the false reports that were sent by wire and correspondence; with doubt and fear; with the credit of the Republic disappearing, this tall, gaunt, sad-faced man, born of the children of toil, kept his courage. To me there is no greater example in the history of the human race of magnificent leadership and patriotism than that of Abraham Lincoln during that contest.

George William Curtis in notifying Lincoln of his second nomination said:

Amid the bitter taunts of eager friends and the fierce denunciation of enemies, now moving too fast for some, now too slow for others, they have seen you throughout this tremendous contest patient, sagacious, faithful, just, leaning upon the heart of the great mass of the people and satisfied to be moved by its mighty pulsations.

In that one sentence Mr. Curtis expressed the great qualities of Lincoln and the secret of his success as a leader of the American people.

Moses was a great character. He led his people over the desert for forty years to the promised land; but, in my judgment, speaking respectfully, I believe that Abraham Lincoln was the

greatest leader that this world ever produced, and in that great struggle for a government of the people, and for free men and freedom, he laid a foundation upon which I trust and believe the Republic will endure through the ages. [Applause.]

THREE PRESIDENTS ASSASSINATED.

"Lincoln was assassinated. That wild egotist, Booth, assassinated him. Later on Garfield was assassinated, and later on McKinley. All were assassinated by egotists: in my judgment all those assassins were unbalanced. I do not mention the names of papers or men. I have searched and searched in vain for any great conspiracy that led to the assassination of those three Presidents. My deliberate opinion is that a sensational press that was making an advertisement for the sale of its wares inspired those unbalanced egotists to assassination. [Applause.]

Do not let anybody say I am abusing the press. I am not. I am condemning the abuse of the press. If I had supreme power I would not suppress it, because in the day of the telegraph and the telephone, in our exceedingly busy life and civilization, headlines are about all that many of us can read. If we read the dispatches, frequently we find that the headlines are a lie if the dispatches are true. [Laughter.] Well, are they to destroy the Republic? Nay, nay. Uncomfortable, yes; but a free people, competent for self-government in the fullness of time, when they see a sheet of paper that yesterday was blank and that last night ran through a press and now is covered with ink, will learn to think twice and inquire whether or no what is said on that sheet of paper is true. [Applause.]

In conclusion, my fellow-citizens, I want to say two things. In a government of the people, as contradistinguished from an absolute monarchy or a limited monarchy, government can only be had by and through a majority. Why, the churches understand that if they did not organize they would not be worth a song sung in a hurricane. [Laughter.] They have their organization. Take your Masonic lodges, your benevolent societies, your business organizations, your school districts, your townships, your counties, your States, by whom are they governed? The wild-eyed son of destiny who does not agree with anybody turns out and says, "God and one are a majority," forgetting that God is a majority without him. [Laughter and applause.]

Perfection is not to be found anywhere, except with Deity; but you must have organization. And in our Government organization is had through parties. Sometimes parties make mistakes. Sometimes you have graft. Some individual gets in and steals something. That is very bad. That happens sometimes in school districts, municipalities, townships, counties, States, and in the Federal Government. That is very, very bad; but so long as in the fullness of time the people, becoming informed, choose officials who are actuated by sound and just public sentiments, who are not guilty of graft, who will see to it that the laws are enforced, so long as that happens we need have no fear of the perpetuity of the Republic. [Applause.] One swallow does not make a summer.

GREATEST MONUMENT TO LINCOLN.

One of the greatest achievements of Lincoln was that, through his partisanship, being a practical man, he led in the formation

of the Republican party, that party which has been longer in power than any other in the history of the Republic. Its policies, which were Lincoln's policies, have dominated the Republic, save in one instance, where the opposition party came into complete control of the executive and both branches of the legislative departments, and after four years of that, the erring prodigal children of the Republic came back to the old home with joy. [Laughter and applause.]

For more than a generation poets, orators, historians, artists, and architects have been trying to build enduring monuments to Lincoln, as men of less ability and pretension have been groping after means for expressing their appreciation in that way which touches all levels of humanity, a treasured memory of a plain man who was equal in wisdom, courage, and humanity to meet all the responsibilities placed upon him by his fellow-men; but to me the most fitting monument to Lincoln is the party he helped organize, and the achievements of the policies he helped develop for the lasting benefit of the whole country, East and West, North and South, white and black.

The party of Lincoln has had longer life, longer control of the Government than any other party, and under its administration has been written the most marvelous history of human achievements ever recorded by any people in any time since the beginning.

Lincoln was one of the founders of the Republican party, its first great leader, and the principles embodied in the first platform are still the principles of the party.

Lincoln will always be known as the first and foremost Republican, as he will ever be known as second to no other American. He was a party man, battling for principles which his party represented, which he believed of vital interest to the American people.

The Territories which Lincoln sought to save from slavery have surpassed the wildest speculation and prophecy in 1860, and the homestead act, passed in Lincoln's administration on his recommendation, has converted the Staked Plains and the Great American Desert into an agricultural empire that has not a parallel anywhere, with the most independent, the most prosperous, and the richest people per capita to be found on this continent. That newer West has to-day double the total wealth of the United States at the time Lincoln was elected, and one-third the whole wealth of the country to-day, which is one-third the wealth of the whole civilized world.

But, even more than this, the policies of Lincoln have brought a new life to the South that rebelled against the Union. In the last decade that section has had the most remarkable development that has been recorded by the Census Office—greater than New England, greater than the Middle Atlantic or the Middle States, and even greater than the West, which was the special care of Lincoln—until in its prosperity the South is almost ready to admit that "the stone rejected by the builders shall become the chief corner stone of the temple." They have found prosperity and happiness in Lincoln's policies. The scars of war have disappeared. Furnaces and factories have sprung into existence as if by magic.

There are few men in the South to-day who will not admit that Lincoln's policies saved the South from its own errors and started that section of the country on the real road to prosperity. These men would not go back to the servile labor for which they rebelled against the authority of the majority and fought against it for four long years.

They have seen the light, and this achievement of a united country, with the same interests, making it a homogeneous country, as it never was before, justify my assertion that the Republican party and what has been wrought under its policies in this half century make the most fitting monument to Lincoln, under whose leadership the slave was made free, and what is of far greater importance, the white man was set free.

THE FUTURE OF OUR GOVERNMENT.

I have no fears about the perpetuity of our respective state governments and of the National Government. We have to be vigilant. The people must be intelligent. Men of force must take part in government, because they are sovereign. But how magnificently we are meeting the conditions. This day in the great Republic there are 16,000,000 children in the common schools, and for the education of the oncoming sovereign who is to control the destinies of the Republic we are spending half of all the money that is spent for education in the whole civilized world. Expensive, do you say? Yes. This is not a cheap Government. [Laughter.] As long as a government of the people remains, it never will be a cheap Government, because as the old feed out and the new feed in they must needs be not only patriotic but intelligent.

Men of the Chamber of Commerce of Pittsburg, I look into your faces, intelligent, virile, leaders in production, men who own and represent capital, which is necessary for production. I do not know your genesis, personally; but I will guess that in nine cases out of ten, on an average, less than a half a century ago you were the bright-faced school boys in the common schools, building your castles in Spain. You will never live in them, but the effort to live in them makes civilization. You can not produce by your capital alone. Money will not work by itself. Money expended, striking hands with labor, becomes production. Edward Atkinson has said that if all production should cease, and you could convert all the wealth of the world into subsistence, in three years it would all be gone. Fifty years from now, when this chamber of commerce holds a meeting to celebrate the birthday anniversary of Abraham Lincoln, and perchance the Speaker of the National House of Representatives, and the eminent commoner from Massachusetts, and the magnificent governor of the great Keystone State comes to assist you, do you want to know who will be the Speaker and the commoner and the governor, and the members of your Chamber of Commerce, who will assemble in this or some similar room? Go to the public schools and find the children of the sons of toil who under God's fiat are living in the sweat of their faces, and there behold your successors. [Applause.]

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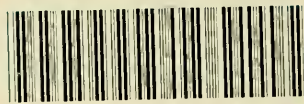
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